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TREATY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 14 May 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the statement of the Australian Prime Minister dated 12 May 1998 concerning the conduct of nuclear tests by India.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter, together with its annex, issued as a document of the General Assembly, under item 64, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Caroline MILLAR
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Statement dated 12 May 1998 by the Australian Prime Minister, the Honourable John Howard, on the Indian nuclear tests

India's action in conducting three underground nuclear tests is an ill-judged step that could have most damaging consequences for security in south Asia and globally.

Australia has a direct security interest in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Indian tests are in flagrant defiance of the international community's strong support for nuclear non-proliferation and its opposition to nuclear testing. To date, 186 countries are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and 149 countries have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

India's neighbours will naturally be concerned about the tests but a nuclear arms race is not the way to address the issue of maintaining stability in south Asia. The Government urges them not to respond in ways that would further destabilize security in the region.

The Foreign Minister has called in the Indian High Commissioner today to convey our condemnation of the tests in the strongest possible terms. The same message will be registered by our High Commission in New Delhi.

The Government is recalling our High Commissioner from New Delhi for consultations. Further action will be decided in the light of those consultations and discussions with other countries that share our concern.